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ABSTRACT

In discussing cultural awareness, this report points out the needs for teacher education in this area. The report questions the utility of the melting-pot image for America; it expresses the belief that ethnic, racial, and cultural differences do exist, and that educators ought to recognize, value, and reward these differences. The mulci-ethnic or pluralistic model is proposed as a more relevant educational model for the 1970's. Work in training teachers in this area is described. (Author/JW)

EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS

by

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PREFACE

"Education for Cultural Awareness" by Roger Baty is the fourth publication in a series of contract papers funded by the Regional Dissemination Module of Western Regional School Desegregation Projects. Dr. Baty's paper is divided into three sections: The Need for Cultural Awareness Education, The Emerging Pluralistic Model and Teacher Re-Education for Cultural Awareness.

Dr. Baty questions the utility of the melting-pot image for America. Current intergroup tensions and violence attest to the fact that ethnic, racial and cultural differences do exist. Educators must act creatively to recognize, value and reward these differences.

Dr. Baty proposes the multi-ethnic or pluralistic model as a more relevant educational model for the 1970's. Adoption of the multi-ethnic model by school administrators, teachers and students will lead to the bridging of cultural gaps and grow[illegible] cultural differences.

In the final section of the paper, Dr. Baty presents teacher re-education for cultural awareness. Dr. Baty describes his work in training teachers to foster the development of the multi-ethnic or pluralistic climate in the classroom. According to Dr. Baty, "A pluralistic model of education must exist in the mind of the teacher if it is to exist and grow in the minds of the students."

INTRODUCTION

I. The Need for Cultural Awareness Education

It is increasingly dysfunctional to think of American culture as a homogeneous set of values or of behaviors. There is a lack of congruence between the image of America as a melting pot within which individual differences are boiled down into a single blended stew and the social reality which exists in our country today. One of the prime instruments of assimilation in our society has been the American public school, but we can no longer accept without question this traditional function of the educational system. The persistent problems that occur every year in the form of intergroup violence attest to the fact that ethnic, racial and cultural differences do exist. Educators must act creatively and positively to recognize, value, and reward those differences.

II. The Emerging Pluralistic Model

An educational model which seems to be much more relevant, in the sense of being more complex and capable of ministering to the diversity that exists in this country, is a multi-ethnic or pluralistic model. The purpose of the educational system, according to this model, would be to prepare people for life in a multi-ethnic society and indeed in a multi-ethnic and culturally diverse world.

There is a growing readiness on the part of school administrators, teachers, and concerned lay people to support experimentation in order to find new ways of bridging cultural gaps and learning more about human differences. To date the main effort has been expended towards physically bringing children of different cultural backgrounds together. Probably

the main approach that has been used is the busing method. But there has been too little attention given to the changes in curriculum and the development of new educational strategies which must go into effect after the physical integration of schools has been achieved. There are a number of human factors involved in bringing people together. Educators must begin to deal with these human factors and develop programs which will foster the potential for growth which exists when people of different backgrounds are brought together.

II. Teacher Re-education for Cultural Awareness: a component of the pluralistic model

This paper illustrates how the teacher can be trained or re-educated in order to foster the development of a pluralistic climate in the classroom. The teacher is the person responsible for the management and the maintenance of a classroom climate and it is extremely important that more attention be given to this aspect of the educational process. A pluralistic model of education must exist in the mind of the teacher if it is to exist and grow in the minds of the students.

EDUCATION FOR CULTURAL AWARENESS

by Roger M. Baty*

I. The Need For Cultural Awareness

Generations of Americans have assumed that an American culture could be created through the assimilation or absorption of people of different backgrounds. As people immigrated to this country, they brought many diverse languages and many contrasting culture patterns. Most of those who came gradually lost their ties with the old country and sought their identity as an American.

They were aided in this task by the American public school system. The public schools served to provide children with common language, reckoning and reading skills. Over time, one nation was created from the members of many nations. E Pluribus Unum --"from many, one" -- stands for the process through which differences were blended to create a common denominator, the identity of being an American citizen.

While our schools have made a valuable contribution toward nation building, it is becoming increasingly apparent that there are stresses and strains within our country which must not be ignored if we are to survive as a nation. There are signs in the daily newspapers, on the radio and television, that people are becoming increasingly intolerant of one another and increasingly aware of the differences which exist between people and groups. Even if our schools recognize this phenomenon, there

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is no guarantee that they will be successful in dealing with it. Dr. Robert D. Hess, writing in the Harvard Educational Review, (Summer, 1968) has summed up the situation this way:

> In the past, the schools have served an acculturating, melting pot function, providing common allegiance and values to bring together in a single country immigrant groups from different ethnic and national backgrounds. It now seems, however, that the ethnic and cultural differences within the nation cannot be easily blended into unity. Divergences and inequities which have been ignored, particularly with respect to Negroes in the society, are dramatically apparent. It is evident to many citizens that the picture of unity, equality, and freedom that is so often presented is distorted, oversimplified, and, to a degree, false. Indeed, political socialization in the schools may have created an attitude of complacency, a willingness to accept the image of unity and freedom--as well as the actions of the government--and, in so doing, it may have contributed to the feelings of disillusionment and the consequent climate of protest. It is by no means assured that the schools can now deal with the issues of political socialization that these new conditions present or that adequate changes can be effected which would provide more relevant teaching of political attitudes, values, and behaviors.

As this statement indicates, these are times when old assumptions are being challenged. Many people are now engaged in the search for viable alternative assumptions and approaches to the task of preparing the young for adult roles. One approach, urged by Dr. Hess, is that of recognizing the situation as it exists and training children in the schools to cope with reality and not exclusively with ideals--to include in the training the elements of emotion and action in addition to cognition. The point to be made is that new approaches must be invented if the educational system is to play a part in relieving some of the internal problems facing the "American" society.

I am confident that our schools could do a better job of teaching young people how to live well with their fellow man in a complex society--

indeed, in a complex world. Our young people have been "short-changed" in a sense, because they have not learned about human differences and what adjustments are necessary to live and work with people of backgrounds different from their own. (Miel, 1962). Consequently, students are graduating from schools and colleges with inadequate and often faulty perceptions of the points of view of other people in our society.

Lack of understanding means, in psychological terms, that one projects assumptions on other people and acts on the basis of what he assumes others are thinking or feeling. Many times these assumptions are incorrect and the outcome may be a negative experience. To be effective, it is essential to test our assumptions about other peoples' attitudes and values before acting on the basis of what we think they are thinking.* In general terms, it is dysfunctional to assume that other people think the same way and value the same things as we do; yet our educational system has been assuming that the American culture is a homogeneous set of values and behaviors.

The failure to understand how other people think, or the lack of skills required to find out how other people think and are likely to behave can have more than personally embarrassing results. This failure can also lead to large-scale violence. Much of the violence and turmoil in public schools can be attributed to the failure of various groups to communicate and understand one another. Lack of understanding is associated with low tolerance which in turn is associated with violence. This generalization is not limited to violence between racial groups. It also applies to relationships between administrators and teachers, on the one hand, and

* I am indebted for this insight to Mr. Del R. Poling, former director of the Center for Creative Living and Spiritual Growth in Athens, Georgia.

students, or groups of students on the other.

In theoretical terms, any individual or group has certain situations for which its tolerance is low. In such situations, the individual or group may act aggressively toward those who are perceived to be causing the trouble. When those with low tolerance do act in aggressive ways, there are others who, in turn, are intolerant of this behavior since they are threatened by it. The second group of people then react aggressively toward the first group.

Many students, for example, have a low tolerance for authority. In situations where authority is exercised, the students may act aggressively. The authorities (teachers, administrators) have a low tolerance of aggressive students and, in turn, invoke their power and act aggressively against the students, perhaps by calling in police to help quell disturbances. Both groups thus end up using methods which they both profess to abhor--namely aggressive behavior or violence. In many instances, it is possible that violence could have been averted had those involved been more skilled at finding out what one another's assumptions happened to be. However, the need to develop these skills will not be recognized as long as the model used to guide our thinking is one which is homogeneous rather than heterogeneous; uniform rather than diverse.

How has the need for thinking in pluralistic terms been avoided?

In many schools in Southern California, one would have little reason to challenge the melting pot theory of public education. Many schools are characterized by a vast majority of Anglo youngsters from well-to-do backgrounds, and a sprinkling of minority students, of which the majority are Jewish and assimilated Orientals. There may be a few Black students but almost no Mexican American or Indian students. This is the environment

in which many young people are raised. The school, rather than mirroring reality, is protecting the students from first-hand acquaintance with the real world. Since there is little contact with culturally different people, the students and teachers do not perceive a need to learn about cultural differences. This lack of perceived need is perhaps the greatest obstacle to overcome in the task of educating for cultural awareness.

The lack of perceived need to know about human differences allows the school system to avoid the lack of congruence between the image of America as a melting pot within which individual differences are boiled down into a single blended stew and the social-cultural reality which exists in our country today.

Avoidance of the issues accompanying social and cultural diversity is practiced at all levels of the educational system and in sometimes very subtle ways. Earlier I mentioned that aggressive outcomes are often associated with conditions or acts for which one has a low level of tolerance. That is only one of the possible outcomes. Equally likely, perhaps, is the tendency to withdraw from such a situation and, thereby, avoid dealing with it. Patterns of avoidance which are practiced at the individual level come to be reflected over time in the organization and structure of schools and of entire communities and towns. School districts often reflect in their student populations the practices and habits of avoidance at the community level. If that were not the case, there would be little force behind the movement to integrate schools; schools would already be integrated.

Within the schools themselves, there are several sources of the avoidance tendency. I shall discuss only two: external pressure, and teacher insecurity.

Avoidance due to external pressure

Administrators are faced with pressures from many sources outside the school. One source of external pressure is parental concern. Middle class parents apply considerable pressure to ensure that their children are being properly prepared for the future. The curriculum reflects the middle class values which are being asserted by the middle class parents.

Administrators can tolerate or cope with the pressure from middle class parents, as long as the children of those parents are doing well in school. When the administrators encourage practices which might threaten the academic preparation children are receiving, then parental pressure can become intolerable. As a result administrators tend to avoid such situations and work to ensure that at least the needs of middle class parents are reflected in school practice.

The needs of the majority always seem to end up as the needs which the teacher tries to meet. In this manner, the teacher is avoiding the external pressure that would result if she were not doing her best to help those succeed who came from relatively well-to-do backgrounds. In terms of what goes on in the classroom, this means that areas of subject matter that are more relevant to minority group members--such as the contribution of minority people to our country's history, or discussions of the points of view of minority people, or even intergroup relations--tend to receive less attention than the history of the majority and the language used by the majority.

The nature of external pressures means that solutions are sought which respond to majority viewpoints. Compromises, whereby attention is given to a plurality of viewpoints, are rare, unless there is countervailing pressure from the minority groups. This dynamic is well understood by the black and brown militant groups and helps account for some of the procedures which

those groups employ.

In many communities, however, the countervailing pressure from minority groups is not present. This is especially true where the minorities are assimilating and acquiring middle class status. In such communities, parents from minority groups seek to avoid controversy and not to assert themselves against the school system. In such situations, pressure from minority students can usually be successfully ignored.

Avoidance due to teacher insecurity

Teachers tend to have a low tolerance for leading discussions in subject matter areas which they know little about. If they don't know the material, there is a feeling of uncomfortableness that serves as a warning to avoid certain areas. By contrast, once a teacher knows something about a subject, she will feel much better about encouraging discussions of the topic in the classroom. In terms of our discussion of tolerance, teacher tolerance for introduction of relatively unfamiliar topics into the classroom will increase to the extent the teacher is informed about the area of controversy.

Teachers are often insecure about topics such as race relations, minority history and intergroup relations. They have not been trained to lead classroom work in those areas. As a result, teachers avoid initiating classroom discussion on topics such as the place of the Chicano in contemporary society.

It may also be due to teacher insecurity that controversial areas are treated toward the end of the year, if at all. By that time, there is little time left for projects or experiments which might result from classroom discussion. One motive for delaying discussion is to give the teacher

time to prepare the lessons. Unfortunately, all too often, the time which might be spent on lesson preparation is diverted to other more pressing needs. The real misfortune, however, is that teacher insecurity prevents topics from being discussed in the classroom when they are most relevant. This will depend on the history of the dynamic of each particular class and it is unfortunate if the teacher is unable to make use of topics which arise spontaneously as a result of child behavior and interaction.

A serious source of avoidance is the tendency to neglect doing anything about those areas in which one is insecure. Teachers, for example, who may recognize their deficiencies in the area of cultural awareness, tend to avoid that area because they know little about it. They fail to realize that precisely because they know little about it, they should dig into the subject matter and by their own example facilitate students' interest.

Avoidance at the institutional and community level

While patterns of avoidance exist at the level of individuals and groups, they also exist at the level of institutions and communities. Institutions such as schools, for example, have carefully marked areas to which only certain people are admitted. The teacher lounge, for example, is not meant to be a place where the children can bring their problems. The staff, aides, and janitors are unwelcomed there. The use of territory follows intricate lines of subtle avoidance patterns. The reason for those patterns, in many instances, is the threat which contact would pose to the elevated status of the "professional" person. Professionals tend to have a low tolerance of reduction in their status; hence, the use of territory to protect status differences from erosion.

What can be seen within one school can also be seen in larger patterns of community organization. For example, housing patterns tend to reflect status differences and wealth differences. Affluent areas are separated from less affluent areas, with the affluent sectors normally located in more elevated and remote sections of the town. Physical separation tends to perpetuate avoidance patterns.

The physical isolation of affluent sectors from the less affluent and often minority communities provides school personnel a convenient rationale for avoiding contact. At one school which I visited recently, the isolation was reinforced by the lack of a bridge in the form of an adequate bus service. When students were offered the opportunity of riding the bus to schools across town, it is little wonder that few in fact transferred out of their district. To reach "desirable" schools took two hours by bus and required five transfers. As a result, the population of this school reflected the distribution of income in the community which in turn was mirrored in the housing patterns which isolated groups according to income. The building administrator saw little that could be done to alter the fact.

Some consequences of avoidance patterns

As a result of avoidance patterns, students learn very little about human differences from what goes on in the classroom. This is true even of students in college. Intercultural experiences of some of my own college students have been accompanied by a sense of shock, frustration and a realization that their previous training and education had not prepared them very adequately for cross-cultural encounters. Quotations from the field journals of two students illustrate the point:

> Before my stay in Duarte I had had very little contact with anyone other than white Anglo-Saxons. My first school day in Duarte I sat down beside a black eighth grader in the office and in a very angry tone was told to move over. I asked "why" and got the response, "I hate Whities."...I could feel the tension, the black resentment, the direct hatred of the girl towards whites...
>
> Through my experiences in Duarte I gained insights into community, society, and culture. I have been made aware of my ignorance about the racial situation in the USA. I remember studying about South Africa's Apartheid system in high school. Never did I realize that an even worse kind of discrimination takes place in the USA and not just in the deep South but right here in California.

Another student noted:

> Prior to my stay in Victorville, I had had no experience whatsoever with any minority, or with any social problems at all. I mean, my social consciousness was as nil and unformed as you can get...now, I've become very conscious of the black and the way we, as whites, are viewed by the two sub-cultures I came in contact with...I had never thought about what being white really is...
>
> You know, I feel like I've missed so much by not living with Negroes and Mexicans, by not growing up with all races like these people in Victorville have. It seems like where the races do live together in San Diego, it's the "bad" sections of town, with low economic conditions, places where I know my parents wouldn't want me to be. So what do I do?

The quotations from college students are illuminating. The second set alludes to a cause of insecurity and lack of information about human differences which resides in child-rearing practices. Children are taught to stay away from "bad parts of town" or "the other side of the tracks." Child-rearing practices, thus, reinforce avoidance tendencies practiced in schools and the community at large. The cumulative effect is to make efforts at building bridges between minority and majority groups very difficult.

Summary

Cultural awareness education has not received greater attention partly because it has been perceived as a "problem" area. As such, administrators, teachers and parents have found it possible to avoid the issues rather than deal with them directly.

Over time, behavior patterns develop which are difficult to change. The habitual ways of doing things become the normal way and the normal way becomes the right way. The right way becomes institutionalized in a series of guidelines and in training practices for teachers. The phenomenon of avoidance can be seen to operate at the individual level, at the institutional level, and at the community level. Once habit patterns are institutionalized, it becomes easier to accept the status quo than change it. The need for change, however, is becoming more and more evident. An alternative to the assimilation model must be developed.

II. The Emerging Model: Fostering a pluralistic approach

In the first part of this paper, I tried to demonstrate some of the strengths and weaknesses of our educational system. In this part I would like to suggest a model which should permit realization of an important potential of the educational system; namely, the use of available resources to teach effectively about human differences.

The model which has been employed in the past has given to the school the function of preparing children from diverse backgrounds for a world of work which rewarded people differently on the basis of the kinds of skills they acquired. This aspect of society probably will not change. But what can change are the methods used by the school to prepare the child for the world of work.

There is a growing readiness on the part of school administrators, teachers and concerned lay people to support experimentation in order to find new ways of preparing people for life in a society and world characterized by cultural diversity. But what is needed is an educational model that would release the potential for this kind of learning.

To date the main effort to devise a new model has been expended toward physically bringing children of different cultural backgrounds together. But there has been too little attention given to the changes in curriculum and the development of new educational strategies which must go into effect after the physical integration of schools has been achieved. Physical integration is not enough. What is needed is a model that incorporates new assumptions and attitudes in addition to new physical arrangements.

Traditionally, under the assimilation model, the child from the different culture had the responsibility to adjust to the norms, values and behaviors of the society reflected through the school, the curriculum, and the teacher. Cultural diversity was ignored, both in the classroom and in the picture of society that was portrayed.

An educational model which seems to be much more relevant, in the sense of being more complex and capable of accommodating the diversity that exists in this country, is an acculturation model. Acceptance of this model means that the teacher, curriculum, and school should recognize the culture of a child from a minority background and be influenced by it. In other words, the needed adjustment and accommodation should be a two-way exchange involving teachers, administrators and ancillary staff as well as the children, their parents, and relatives.

In order to implement the acculturation model, it is first necessary

to change a basic assumption. Instead of viewing cultural diversity as a liability in the classroom, cultural diversity must be viewed as an asset. Once viewed as an asset, the probability increases that steps will be taken to recognize diversity in the classroom.

It is quite likely that differences will appear where none was perceived to exist. Differences among white, black and brown children will appear as well as differences between white, black and brown children. Children will learn to take pride in their differences rather than learn to hide them in order to avoid attention which is feared when differences are not respected. They will rejoice in their uniqueness and welcome its expression.

To be sure, when diversity is recognized, the classroom climate becomes much more complex. Regarding cultural diversity as something to be valued and rewarded in the classroom introduces yet another stress into the classroom. This additional stress is felt by the teacher as well as the students. Training is advisable if the teacher is to be prepared to tolerate the new levels of stress. The remainder of this essay presents a design for training teachers to withstand the additional classroom stress which is likely to be experienced during the initial stages of implementing the acculturation model. The assumption is that if an acculturation model of education can exist in the teacher's mind, it will be more likely to grow in the minds of the students. If teachers are culturally aware, their students are more likely to develop that awareness.

III. An Action-Research Model for Teacher Training

It has been suggested that through the use of appropriate training programs, the ability of teachers to withstand the additional stress resulting from recognizing cultural diversity in the classroom would be enhanced.

In this part, an action-research model which I have used in the past will be described.

Action-research implies that we are interested in improving teacher effectiveness while at the same time gathering data that can be used to help evaluate the improvement that takes place. Without a research component, there is no way of knowing how effective the program was or how it could be modified in order to optimize the intended results. Many in-service training programs are deficient in that they include no research component to provide feedback for use in evaluation.

A design for Action-Research

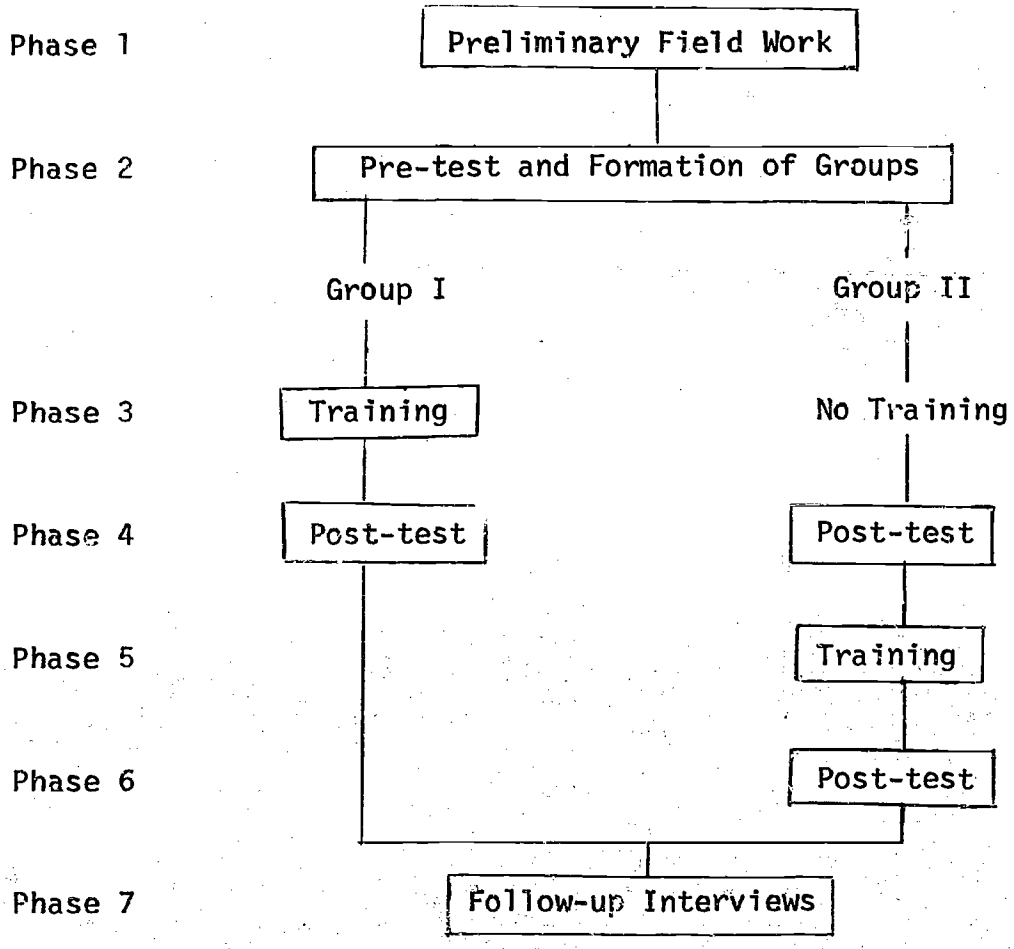
The action-research model which I have employed is called a field experiment using a Pre-test/Post-test Control Group Design with replication.* (See Figure 1).

During the preliminary field work phase, the contacts are made in the school district and in the larger community to build support for the program. Resources in the community which could be tapped for use in the program are also identified at this time and tentative commitments are made in good time to find those who would be able and willing to participate in the presentation of information.

As part of the field work, the Program Director would also assess the needs of the teachers, the district, and the community and would enlist the help of those who were knowledgeable about the community in drawing up

* For those interested in pursuing this discussion in greater depth, the model and case study on which this discussion is based will be published by Praeger later this year under the title: Re-educating Teachers for Cultural Awareness: Preparation for Educating Chicano Children in Northern California.

Figure 1.



objectives for the training program.

From the research side, the Director would determine the factors to be taken into account when assessing program impact. These factors might include teacher personality variables, selected attitudes, demographic characteristics, previous cross-cultural experience, and personal expectations regarding the program. Appropriate instruments would be developed to administer to the teachers in order to gather the data during the pre-test phase.

Once teachers were recruited to the program, they would be randomly allocated to two training groups and they would also receive the pre-test and background data inventory. Group I would receive training first, say during the fall term, and during that time Group II would receive no training. Both groups would receive a post-test, say in December. Analysis of the first post-test would help determine whether the training program had any effect.

In the fifth phase, Group II would receive training and would again receive a post-test. Analysis of the results in this instance would suggest whether the effect of the first training program could be repeated.

In the final phase, which would be timed for April - May, the participants would be interviewed to determine the relatively lasting effects of the training program.

These interviews would also be a source of information which could not be obtained through the more formal pre-test and post-test instruments. Through the interview, data would be gathered to determine more extensively the extent to which the teachers were satisfied with the program, their self-evaluation of what they learned, possible changes in attitude and indications of changes in classroom climate which could be attributed in part to the course. Teachers would be free to comment during the interview on the speakers and other aspects of the program which they found helpful or not helpful.

The value of this design is that everyone benefits. All the teachers receive training, not just those allocated to Group I. In addition, through the use of the control group component, data is gathered which can be very helpful in analyzing changes and increasing understanding of the most effective ways to improve classroom teaching. Needless to say, such a

design is not limited in usefulness to cultural awareness training, but has very broad applicability.

Implementation of the action-research design: A Northern California case

During the '68-'69 school year, I implemented the action-research design in Northern California. The program ultimately involved three elementary school districts and provided cultural awareness education for more than ninety teachers. In addition to the teachers, there were a number of administrators, special services personnel as well as school board members who received the training. In what follows I shall summarize the Northern California experience as an illustration of what can be done to educate teachers for cultural awareness.

Preliminary Field Work

During the summer of 1968, preliminary field work was conducted in the San Francisco Bay area with a view to locating a suitable site for the teacher training program. The theoretical guidelines followed were provided by Lippit, Watson and Westley in their work The Dynamics of Planned Change. Those authors regard the change process as a series of phases. Once a problem is recognized--such as the need for cultural awareness--the change agent develops a working relationship with the client system. Various tasks must be performed during this phase including the clarification of the time perspectives and the involvement of various sub-units of the system in the development of a plan. Once the basic outline is agreed to, the salient problems in the client system are clarified. Goals are then established and alternative routes for attaining the goals are explored. Intentions then become transformed into action

in the form of implementation of the program. Once intentions have been transformed into actual change efforts, one tries to ensure that the changes brought about are stabilized.

Preliminary field work which omits attention to any of the phases outlined by Lippitt, Watson and Westley is likely to suffer from the creation of unintended difficulties which can arise, for example, when various sub-units in the system feel that they have not participated in identifying the problems and establishing goals.

In the course of my own field work, several sites were identified which contained significant minority populations. The possibilities were narrowed to five which were listed in terms of variables including the nature of the predominant minority group, the general socio-economic level of the community, and ease of access to the schools and communities.

The District finally chosen as a base of operations was the Whisman Elementary School District, the Superintendent of which is Mr. Ross Carter. Mr. Carter's description of the problems encountered by the district made it clear that the district personnel and school board members knew they had a problem. Pressure was being exerted on the schools by the Mexican American community. Parents were insisting that the schools raise the self-esteem of their children. They wanted the second language and other abilities of the students to be recognized. They wanted teachers who showed racial bias to undergo sensitivity training. By the time I arrived, officials had received threats of Molotov cocktails.

To move beyond the existing situation, Superintendent Carter was encouraging a program of general curriculum revision from kindergarten through junior college. He was keenly interested in developing a model program which would assist other districts to respond more effectively to

the needs of the minority communities.

Follow-up conversations were held with other staff members in order to get a more complete picture of the history of the district's relationship with the Mexican American community. Interviews, conversations, meetings with community leaders and a study of various written reports confirmed the hypothesis that there were a number of teachers in the district and in the surrounding districts with little understanding of the problems of the Mexican American community. There was considerable encouragement for the idea of a course or training program which would expose the teachers to the cultural heritage and historical background of the Mexican American.

It became clear that the teachers lack knowledge about students whose backgrounds differed from the teachers' own. In the classroom, this results in what might be termed "cultural blindness." Many teachers would agree with the one who told me "I apply my same standards to Mexican American children that I apply to all children. I love them, have fun with them, respect them as individuals, expect them to respect me, and discipline them as I do Anglo Children." In other words, the teacher is saying "I treat them all the same." What in fact takes place, however, is the handing out of a single treatment to children who have different backgrounds and who are, as a result, decoding what the teacher says in different ways. Looking at the problem another way, if a teacher assumes she treats all children the same, but fails to differentiate their responses on the basis of their cultural backgrounds, she is in fact failing to communicate with the children who do not use her own language, "silent" as well as "spoken."

Development of the Training Program

The development of the training program was another aspect of the field

work conducted prior to the beginning of the school year. Community leaders were sought who could interpret the Mexican culture to the teachers. Many of those who were approached said they would be delighted to talk to the teachers. One of those invited to participate attached a higher price to his services than we were able to offer. He said he was through being exploited. Mexican Culture was his specialty, he said, and he would not consider participating for anything less than a professional fee of $150 for an evening's presentation. He thought it was time the school districts began to realize they could not begin to tackle the problems of the minorities without spending some money on the task. "Schools should no longer expect volunteers to do their work for them," he stated.

In addition to those who would present information, the design of the training program called for several small group discussion leaders. The task of finding suitable people for that role was one of the most difficult aspects of program development. The discussion leaders had to have a good grasp of the information that would be presented. In addition, they needed a facility for encouraging teachers to examine their assumptions while developing a better understanding of the background and point of view of the Mexican American. They needed to be a model for the teachers. In other words, the discussion leaders had to represent the sensitivities which the course was attempting to develop in the teachers. This necessitated a knowledge of problems the teacher faced in the classroom as well as a firm understanding of the problems faced by the minorities.

Recruitment, Selection and Placement of Participants

Teachers were contacted during the summer by letter from the Superintendent's office informing them of the plans for the course and inviting

them to submit applications. The letter mentioned that arrangements were being made for the course to be accredited through the State University Extension Service. The tuition charged for the course would be used to defray costs of the guest lecturers, discussion leaders and printed materials.

A total of 1200 teachers were contacted. Of these, 113 returned the application forms. A pre-test questionnaire was then mailed to each of the one hundred and thirteen with instructions to return the questionnaire before the commencement of school.

Using the information contained on the application form, teachers were matched according to years of teaching experience, previous contact with disadvantaged children, and school district. They were then randomly allocated to two courses, one which was to begin in September and the other in January. With few exceptions, the teachers were willing to take the course at the time determined by the random procedure. Randomization was essential for the research component of the project since without it, the two groups would be less comparable.

Description of the Training Program

The objectives of the course were to increase teacher understanding of the cultural background of the Mexican American child, and to help the teacher find ways to increase the child's self-esteem. It was thought that the goals would be accomplished if teachers became aware of their own "cultural blinders"--their own assumptions--and became interested to learn about the cultural backgrounds of all their youngsters, not just the Mexican American.

The program itself consisted of ten three-hour evening sessions held in a local school. Each session had three parts: lecture, question-and-answer

period, and discussion groups. The purpose of the lecture was to provide the teacher with information and contact with leaders from the minority community whom she would likely not have met on her own. The question-and-answer period provided the opportunity to follow up the speaker's points and to engage in dialogue over issues that at times were controversial. The discussion group was intended to provide a supportive small-group climate in which the teacher would gradually become comfortable enough to share her hopes and aspirations as well as some of her problems and difficulties in the classroom. The small group was designed to provide support for the teacher while also helping the teacher see her own teaching methods and approach from different points of view. Through the discussions, the teachers were to relate what was discussed in the lecture to their own classroom.

The presentations of information were related to the background factors influencing the Mexican American. Each was designed to give the teachers a view of the reality existing outside the school in the community. The following topics were covered:

Introduction to Intercultural Studies

Mexican-American Organizations

The Struggle for Improvement of Labor Conditions

Latin Cultural Values: Cultural Differences

Latin Cultural Values: Religion and the Family

Problems Encountered by Spanish-Speaking Children Learning English

Home Visitations

Techniques for Developing Student Participation in the Classroom

Value Conflicts Between the Mexican American Child and the School

The lecture series provided the participants with a cross-sectional

view of the attitudes existing in the Mexican American community. To provide a first-hand exposure to the diversity of views that exists, the range from revolutionary to conservative was represented. As a supplement to the lectures and discussions, a home-visit project was introduced to bring teachers in closer touch with the families of the Mexican American community.

Results

The training program increased the ability of the teacher to tolerate the self-assertiveness of minority people. The resonableness of the demands became more apparent once the teachers understood the background factors which were giving rise to self-assertiveness. Increased tolerance on the part of the teacher is important since those who were high on tolerance were seen to have pupils who were more confident and more self-directed than teachers who were low in tolerance. Teachers whose tolerance was relatively high were also seen to associate more with the students than those whose tolerance was low.

The program also increased the teachers' understanding of alternative procedures (approaches and strategies) for improving the learning situation. The following quotation sums up the responses of several teachers:

> The course has provided a much more rounded understanding of their culture and the effect that this culture has on them today. The understanding of the family structure was indeed valuable since in my experience the father has not been seen at school as often as the mother. I also have further understanding for the mother who does not come to school because she speaks another language. When this situation occurs, I realize as a teacher I have more alternatives (my underline), one of which would be a home visit, merely as a means for the parents to know me casually and perhaps remove the fear of school.
>
> I also feel more prepared to teach the culture of the Mexican-American because I'm interested in learning more details of their history. They have an intriguing, rich background which

I know only sketchily.

One of the most important of the new alternatives was the positive home visit where the teacher would visit to praise the child's progress rather than point out the negative aspects of his performance:

> I also got a deep interest in the home visiting--just doing as much as I could. They were an unknown culture before I took the course

Teachers benefited from the home visits and also from learning more about the reactions of other teachers to the visits as well as to other aspects of the course. The following quotation suggests the scope of what was gained and also pinpoints the home visitations as being a critical aspect of the training program:

> I was grateful to hear what the speakers had to say, and was enchanted at hearing what other teachers at other levels had to say about how they feel, what they think, what they're doing, and what they recognize and what I feel they don't recognize. That was exciting for me, and I think this would not have occurred outside the course. It's something they don't talk about in the coffee rooms but we did talk about it in the course. This was tremendously important...I felt strongly when I came away from the course that home visits were vital.

The new informational input provided by the speakers and through the discussion groups influenced the teachers' perceptions of the normative approach to be used with Mexican American children. This influence was at the cognitive and affective level. Over time, where the influence was sufficiently strong, the teacher was affected at the psychomotor level and old habit patterns were modified in an acculturative direction.

To sum up, action-research models such as the one described above have pragmatic effects and significant pay-off for classroom instruction. The elements present in this model included triangulated support among administration, community leaders and technical assistance. There was adequate lead-time to set up the program and make it relevant to the needs of the

community and school. Teachers volunteered to participate. There was no effort to require attendance. The program extended over a period of ten weeks. It was not a "quicky" course. The presentations of information were authentic and the discussions provided teachers with the opportunity to exchange views. The incentives to participate were meaningful and opportunities for field work were provided.

Where districts can provide in-service training, programs such as the one described have overall positive effects. They constitute an important step in the direction of education for cultural awareness.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This article presents a rationale for fostering cultural awareness as well as a case study of the approaches and strategies used to foster that awareness among school teachers. The methods described here are somewhat traditional since it was important to use techniques which could readily be adapted to the usual inservice routine of the school districts involved. Other strategies have been developed which probably have more potency in terms of their effect on the attitudes and skills of the participants. There is, however, a gap between what is possible and what has been tried and evaluated by research.

It is up to action-researchers and school district personnel to help reduce the gap between what is known to be possible in the area of cultural awareness education, and what actually gets implemented on a district-to-district basis. Action-researchers need to share their experiences and insights, and leaders in the educational system need to encourage action-research at all levels.

It must be emphasized that cultural awareness education is appropriate

where there is a desire on the part of the teachers and school system to recognize, value, and reward cultural differences. Cultural awareness education assumes that diversity can be valued in positive terms. Given this assumption, it should be possible to do much more than has been done in the past to reduce the amount of misunderstanding of human differences which separates person from person and contributes to conflict. As we learn from the diversity that exists within our own community and in our own nation, we will be preparing for the challenges of creating and maintaining a hospitable, diversified environment aboard our space ship, the earth.

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